

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: No, the NAACP wasn't too active at that time in Gaffney. They could have been, but it wasn't widely known like it is now. But in Orangeburg, they had a, and it was. They would talk about it like sometime you go to different, well some of the children would go to the different meetings. I never did attend any of the meetings. They might have said that they was going to meet on campus and some of them would attend the meeting. But it wasn't widely known too much back then like it is now. If whatever they did, it wasn't, I guess you didn't have a news media or something like that to tell you about whatever was happening and you didn't hear, if you didn't participate that much, you didn't really know unless you heard someone else talking about it. So they didn't blow things out of proportion back then like they do now.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: But if they heard of a case or something that needed help or checking into, they did that. And they might have done that in Gaffney too. But like I said, at the time you didn't hear a whole lot about it. And I didn't. Some of the churches, maybe there in the city, the bigger churches might have had the organization working, but they didn't make a whole lot of noise over what they were doing, more or less. I guess they did more work and less talk. But it wasn't widely known like it is now.

Kisha Turner: Did you have to work in college?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Yeah, I did.

Kisha Turner: Did you work to pay your tuition?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Yeah, to help pay it. Well, I worked in the library but it didn't really, wasn't enough to help pay all of my tuition. So I had to drop out of school one year or two because I didn't have the money to return. So I was out one year and then I went to work in, when one of the teachers went back to school, she was working and she went back to school. So I got her job. I taught her job one year while she went back to school.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: And that kind of helped me to get some money to go back. My, yeah, second year. I could work then because like I said, when you were teaching in elementary school, you didn't really have to have a degree then.

Kisha Turner: Right.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: So I dropped out of school for a year and worked in one of those one—room schoolhouse.

Kisha Turner: And you eventually did get your degree?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Yeah.

Kisha Turner: In what?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Elementary Ed.

Kisha Turner: Okay. I want to, I know— Was the racism or segregation any more apparent in Orangeburg? Was it any different than in Gaffney?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Gaffney?

Kisha Turner: Because I know you said you never had any encounters with any.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Now listening to some of the children taught, because they came from all different sections. Like you sit down in, what, Clarendon County where a lot of the Ku Klux Klans was and listen at some of them talk when they came into school. I guess they did have a little more run—ins with segregation, more or less. I guess it might have been worse or something than where I came from in Cherokee County. I guess by our place being small or something, everybody just went on and abide by whatever rules and regulation. You had a few that didn't and it wasn't a whole lot of people throwing you out and all of that kind of stuff. You just, even talking about killing you, which they would do if you didn't follow and you didn't really have too much of that.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: But I heard some of the other children would talk about how it was in their place where some of the places they lived. But in Orangeburg itself, it wasn't. Seemed like— I don't think we did, but over in South Carolina State, some of them had a run in with segregation because they was going to go in someplace they weren't allowed to go, the students and—

Kisha Turner: Sort of sit—in or something?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: No, I don't think they were doing a sit—in or anything. I think— I don't know, I guess they didn't want to use the door, the wherever or the water fountain or, I'm just using that as example. I don't know what the incident was, but it was something pertaining to segregation or something. And if they were supposed to go in this door, they probably went in another door or something, or they didn't want to wait outside to be served or whatever it was. And they just decide to go in, because a lot of the places you could buy food, but they didn't want you to come in except for the little area they had for you or they handed to you out the window or so to speak. And I guess maybe some of them didn't want to do that. And I heard some of the students talking about it over in South Carolina State where they had had run—ins and things with it there in Orangeburg.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: But where you have college students and things like that, a lot of times they

don't take a whole lot once they get together with other students. And especially when you hear the ones that come from up north and talk about what they did. And see, they would come from there, from different areas in the north, and when they come to the southern cities, they didn't want to do that. And that a lot of times would stir up confusion, make confusion with the student. I think that's probably some of the cases that happened over at South Carolina State because they had students from different places.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: And then we had foreign students too from, like you do now from some parts of Africa and then the islands. And I don't know that they had segregation because they didn't, everybody, most especially from the island, everybody was the same. It wasn't no White or Black. They just was whatever they supposed to be. And I guess they couldn't understand that when they came to the states, similar to what they do now.

Kisha Turner: So they realized kind of restricted your movement in terms of where you could go—

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Yeah.

Kisha Turner: — in Orangeburg?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Mm—hmm.

Kisha Turner: How about public transportation, like the buses or anything?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Oh well, you could ride it, but you had to sit in the back like you were supposed to. And if it was filled and you didn't want to wait for the next bus, you could just walk and go wherever you wanted to go. If you had the money, you could get you a cab or whatever like that. But no, they didn't never did have an encounter with the bus like that.

Kisha Turner: Did your parents or teachers or anything, do you remember anyone kind of telling you how to deal with White people or any words of wisdom I guess, or advice?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Yeah. Well, they just always said, "Just kindly do what you're supposed to do according to the law." They just tell you, "Don't break the law or the rules." They called it the law, which was the rules. And they just said, "Do accordingly if you go out and you won't have any problems." And I guess maybe most of the people around in the area did that. And like I said, it wasn't that many places you could go in my hometown anyways because in order to get in trouble, because you just went on and did what you was supposed to do. And I think you had more trouble with your own race than you did with the other race similar.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Because if you went to a public gathering, especially like after the basketball games and football games and things like that, you would stop in a different little, or night spots they called them, and everybody, it was small. Everybody couldn't get in those places. So they would have their big fights and fusses and scrapes on the outside. That's why I said I think they had with themselves, they treated

themselves worse than the other race did.

Kisha Turner: Okay. Is this when your grandparents came to stay with you or was that back in Gaffney?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: That was back in Gaffney.

Kisha Turner: Oh, okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Just like, well, when— My parents kind of, we got kind of separated like a long, two, four, that we couldn't really visit back and forth unless you had a way. My grandparents decided that they wanted to move in the upper parts of the county and my mother and father stayed in the lower parts. So unless you had a car, and which you didn't have too many cars back then, you couldn't go back and forth. So then I just lived with my grandparents then.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I didn't go back and forth as much, except maybe like during the summer or sometime I might go and stay a week or so with them.

Kisha Turner: Okay. Quickly, I guess we can talk about, I know you— Just about church. What church did you go to when you were a child in Gaffney as a young adult, I guess, before you went to college?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Oh, well my church that I belonged to was Wesley Chapel ME Church. And the churches in the country then didn't have church every Sunday.

Kisha Turner: Did you say Emmy or AME?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: ME.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: They didn't have church every Sunday. They just had it like, maybe some of the churches had it once a month and some had it twice a month. But then I attended other churches like on Sundays or I went to Sunday school at a church that I lived nearby, which was a Baptist church, like Mount Sinai. And that was a Baptist church. And I attend that church and Shady Grove. And during revival meeting time, everybody went to all the different churches during revival. Because this church was invited and you go, and that church was invited and the churches was all crowded like that during revival time or if there was any special program or anything. But I attend Mount Sinai and Shady Grove.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: That's about most of the church. But then I would always go to our church, which was Wesley Chapel, and that was in the lower part of the county. And we didn't really get, we had service like once or twice a month. Most of the time it was just once a month. And if there was a special

program or something put on, you were always there. But as far as a Sunday school or something, you lived too far to have Sunday school there. So I always went to Sunday school at one of the closer churches or Baptist church. So it really didn't—I was just going to Sunday school anyway. I don't guess it really mattered that much. That's the way I guess we looked at it.

Kisha Turner: Did you all, how'd you get to church?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Well, my uncle had a car and a lot of times he would take us to church.

Kisha Turner: Okay. And let's see, when did you come to Virginia Beach?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: After I got married.

Kisha Turner: Oh, when did you get married?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I got married in '56. Leroy was in service and he was in the Navy, but my grandparents was living with me then. So I didn't really come. I came my first, I came here in '70. I came here in '72.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: And that's when I really came and I been here ever since.

Kisha Turner: So you all met in Gaffney and got married in Gaffney?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: Mm—hmm.

Kisha Turner: What was the wedding like? Where did hold it?

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I didn't have a wedding.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I just had a marriage like in my home.

Kisha Turner: Okay.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I just had a marriage ceremony in my house and that's where he came home on a furlough and on leave. They called it furlough at that time. But I had known him for some time. But when he was going to school, but I didn't really, didn't go with him at that time when he was in school. And then he went back into— He was in the Army first and he came out of the Army and he went to school when I was in school. But I didn't really pay him any attention or we didn't pay each other any attention at that time

because I guess we had other friends. And then he went back, he went into the Navy and when he came back on his leaves, that's when I really met him. And we got married in '56 and I came, start traveling with him in '60, '64, I think it was, I start traveling with him because my grandparents had died then. So I could afford to go back and forth with him.

Toledo Knuckles Littlejohn: I had a home in South Carolina, so I bought a home. Then when I started working, and they was living with me, so to speak, but when I was renting, they also was living with me when I started, got my job and started work. And then I bought this home and they lived with me. But then after they died and Leroy said, "Well, now that they dead, you can travel back and forth with me." And I start traveling with him and we came here first and we stayed here one year and we left and went all around to different places, Florida, California. And then we came back here and we've been here ever since.

Kisha Turner: Okay. All right. Thank you.